



Listening points

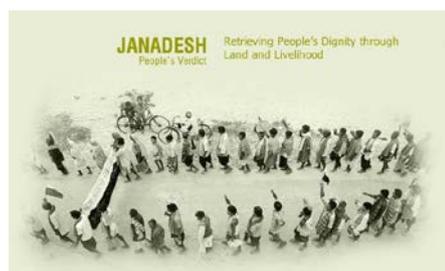
Ekta Parishad

In 2001 a man came from India to Britain. His name is Rajagopal. He invited Quakers in Britain to join him in his nonviolence work. He works alongside some of the poorest people in India and he had met Quakers before. When he was young he had heard stories about a man called M.K.Gandhi. He loved what this famous peace worker did and said.

Rajagopal went to live amongst poor people in a place where many poor people were threatened by other poor people called dacoits (local thugs) who had guns. Many had been hurt or even killed. The place was called Chambal Valley. In 1971, despite being threatened, beaten up and told to leave by the dacoits, he stayed. He worked very hard to get more than 600 dacoits to lay down their guns.

The dacoits who gave up their guns and stopped hurting people went to prison. Afterwards they were given some land to grow food and look after their families. One man told the story of how he had been hurt by the police. He was terribly angry and decided he would get a gun to look after his family but he hurt lots of other people. When he came out of prison he began a more settled life.

In 2002 Stuart Morton, Quaker worker, met him. This former local terrorist was now supporting Ekta Parishad's nonviolent struggle to assist poor people. He has helped thousands of people learn to be nonviolent when they are stopping other, often rich and powerful people, taking or stealing their land, water and forests. 35 years later and after thousands of miles of walking to villages to support the needs of the poorest people, Rajagopal led a 200+ mile march called Janadesh ("Peoples Verdict") to peacefully fight for poor people's right to have what the land they need to live. Rajagopal is one of the leaders of something called Ekta Parishad. This means Unity Forum.





Making a clay figure

Look at the pictures of the women on the Janadesh march.

Flatten a ball of clay and roll it out to make an oval – maybe 8 inches by 4 inches. Using a pencil or a clay tool mark the shape of a marcher in the clay. Carefully cut out the shape using a knife or sharp clay tool. If you want to give the figure a face use the pencil or tool to carefully cut into the surface of the clay. Mark patterns on the body for patterns of fabric. Once the clay has dried, use acrylic paints and sequins to decorate the figure. A Janadesh or Ekta Parishad poster or banner can be added using a cocktail or lolly stick and card.